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DSSD CENSUS 2000 PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM SERIES # N- 6

MEMORANDUM FOR Brian Monaghan
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Attention: Management Training Branch

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Subject: Observation of the Update/Leave and Urban Update/Leave
 Operations

I. INTRODUCTION

From March 13 through March 15, 2000, I observed the Update/Leave (U/L) and Urban Update/Leave (UU/L) field and office operations conducted by the Opelousas Local Census Office (LCO). The Opelousas LCO is responsible for eleven parishes, most of which are classified as U/L areas.

II. Observation of Urban Update/Leave Enumerator

On March 13, I accompanied an UU/L enumerator to Lafayette Parish. I asked him about the accuracy of the census maps and he told me that a significant number of the street names had not been updated. Therefore, he supplemented these maps with the local service maps which he found to be more accurate. As of March 13, the enumerator had completed five census blocks where the average block contained about twenty housing units. In UU/L, each census block comprises an Assignment Area (AA). The AAs are grouped to form Field Assignments (FA).

When we arrived at our location, the enumerator correctly canvassed the block in a clockwise direction, verifying what he found on the ground against what was listed in the address binder. Verifying housing units was not always easy. Many of the units did not contain a house number. When this occurred, the enumerator attempted to verify the information by looking for a street mailbox or by asking a neighbor. When he could not verify an address,

he said that he would return to the housing unit later on in the evening. However, according to his enumerator manual, call backs are not permitted.

When the enumerator was greeted by a housing unit occupant, he correctly introduced himself as a census worker, showed his badge, explained his mission, handed the occupant a Privacy Act Notice, conducted a brief interview following the proper protocol, and handed the occupant a questionnaire. He then asked the occupant to complete the questionnaire and return it by April 1. I found most of the occupants to be very cooperative and well informed of the upcoming census. Many of them reported that they heard about the census through television and local print advertisement.

When the enumerator visited a household where the occupants were not home, he verified as much address information as possible and left a questionnaire. In canvassing one AA, the enumerator located a house that was not listed in the binder. He correctly added it to the housing unit add page and prepared a questionnaire for the occupant.

III. Observation of Dependent Check of Completed Urban Update/Leave FA

For each FA completed by an enumerator, the Crew Leader (CL) and/or the Crew Leader Assistant (CLA) first select two AAs at random and then within each AA they randomly select a designated housing unit. Beginning with the designated housing unit, the CL and/or his/her assistant(s) canvass seven consecutive housing units, comparing the units identified on the ground to those listed in the address binder. The quality of the work performed on these fourteen housing units is used to estimate the quality of the work performed on the entire FA. The results are recorded on the Quality Assurance Dependent Verification Record, Form D-944B (UU/L).

When I asked the CL if she had any difficulty selecting her sample, she seemed oblivious as to what I was talking about. Apparently, she was unaware of the random number tables located in her CL Manual. Instead of checking a sample of housing units in each block, she checked every unit.

In performing the Dependent Check, the CL found out that the enumerator failed to add a whole row of missed housing units. I soon learned that the CL did not have a copy of the D-944B (UU/L) form to record the results. She told me that her Field Operations Supervisor (FOS) did not provide her any copies. I also learned that she did not have copies of form D-944A (UU/L) when she conducted the Initial Observation QA Check. However, she did take notes and told me that she would transfer the results as soon as the forms were made available. When I visited the LCO on the third day of my field trip, the CL's FOS told me that none of his CLs were given QA forms because he himself had only received copies of these forms the day before.

IV. Observation of Dependent Check of Completed Update/Leave AA

On March 14, I traveled about 50 miles to Jefferson Davis Parish to observe the U/L operation. I met a FOS, a CL, a CLA, and an enumerator. The CL told me that he and his two assistants performed the Initial Observation QA Check of enumerators. He found the Initial Observation checklist useful in identifying tasks that enumerators had difficulty performing. The CL felt that more emphasis should have been placed on map reading during the enumerator training.

The Dependent Check is a quality check of each AA completed by an enumerator. For each completed AA, beginning with a housing unit selected at random, the CL and/or the CLAs canvass six consecutive housing units in each of two randomly selected blocks. As the CL and/or the CLAs canvass the housing units, they check to make sure that each housing unit identified on the ground has been verified, added, or deleted in the address binder and on the block map. The results are recorded on the Quality Assurance Review page found on the back of the address binder's cover page.

I observed the CLA perform the Dependent Check in an extremely rural area. None of the randomly selected blocks checked contained six housing units --- most had three or four. To get to these housing units we had to drive along dirt and gravel-filled roads. In checking one of the sample blocks, the CLA found out that the enumerator failed to correct the spelling of a street name. On another, the enumerator failed to add a housing unit which by all appearances looked abandoned. However, the CLA added it because the roof and floor were intact and it had a meter, although not running. The CLA was well-versed in her job and in performing the Dependent QA Check. However, I did not see her record the results of the Dependent Check on the appropriate QA form. She did take notes though, so maybe she planned on recording them at a later time.

V. Observation of Update/Leave Enumerator

I then observed an U/L enumerator as he performed his duties. When an occupant greeted him, he explained his mission, showed his badge, handed the occupant a Privacy Act Notice, and then conducted a brief interview. Even though dogs guarded most of the homes that we visited, the enumerator approached each house without trepidation. In one instant, a pit bull jumped into our car. Luckily for us, it was friendly. The enumerator had a thorough understanding of his responsibilities and he performed them in a professional and courteous manner.

VI. Observation of Office Review

On March 15, I observed the QA Office Review of completed U/L and UU/L address binders. The office clerk who reviewed the completed U/L binders did not refer to the QA checklist while checking the binders and census maps. As a result, she would sometimes forget to tally

critical errors as she came across them. The clerk who reviewed the UU/L binders did use the QA checklist and, for the most part, performed the review in accordance with the established procedures.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

For the most part, the UU/L enumerator whom I observed, performed his duties according to the established procedures. He made every attempt to verify the listings in the binders and to locate missed housing units. However, he should not be making call backs. On the other hand, the CL whom I observed, did not perform the Dependent QA Check correctly. Because she was unaware of the sampling procedure listed in her manual she checked every housing unit in each AA instead of fourteen. Moreover, she did not have a copy of the appropriate QA form on which to record the results.

The U/L enumerator whom I observed performed his job according to guidelines as did the CLA. They were particularly adept at map reading and locating housing units. Although the CL did have the appropriate QA form, she did not record any results on this form while I observed her. However, she did take notes and probably intended to transfer them at a later time.

The two office clerks whom I observed both performed a thorough review of the address binders. However, I would recommend that they always refer to the QA checklist while performing this review.

CC:

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